

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

file

~~SECRET/NOFORN~~

February 16, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER

FROM:

Al Haig *EH*

SUBJECT:

Sourcing of Nigerian [REDACTED] Item of February 13

Attached is the CIA report you requested which led to their judgment that the Biafrans may have reversed their attitudes towards the Central Nigerian Government.

I believe CIA's evidence certainly warrants a judgment to that effect in relative terms. Perhaps their choice of language was less than judicious. On the other hand, I would be careful not to be overly impressed with ultra liberal attitudes which up until now had helped to keep the war going by their insistence that the Biafrans would be wiped out to a man if the Central Government prevailed. The overriding fact is that the Central Government, in terms of the liberal's ~~policy~~ *predictions* has been exceptionally moderate in its post-victory demeanor. Had we listened to these same voices several months ago, we would have done far more to prolong the war, the suffering and the killing than we did.

I think it is equally important from a self interest point of view, if nothing else, that we do not now start nitpicking the Central Government to the point of total alienation which can only be exploited by the Soviets. In short, I do not share Roger Morris' attitudes with respect to the plight of the Biafrans although I recognize they are largely justified from a humanitarian point of view. They are not, however, justified from a hard-nosed U.S. interest point of view.

Attachment

~~SECRET/NOFORN~~

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
April 21, 2005

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

~~SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~

14 February 1970

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Sourcing of Nigerian [REDACTED] Item of 13 February

1. The Nigerian item [REDACTED] of 13 February was adapted from an article prepared for the Current Intelligence Bulletin of the same date. The CIB article originated with the Nigerian specialists in the Office of Current Intelligence and was coordinated with the Department of State and the Defense Intelligence Agency.
2. The key judgments contained in the item--that in general, federal post war actions so far represent a sincere and reasonably successful attempt to implement the Gowon government's reconciliation policy and that most Ibos recognize this and have been responding accordingly--are based on a mass of evidence which has accumulated since the civil war ended last month. There have, of course, been frictions and embittering incidents at the direct contact level. The overriding impression generated by the material coming in from all sources over the past three weeks, however, is that the basic relationship between victor and vanquished at this point is impressively good. The intelligence community believes that the federal relief program, whatever its deficiencies, has contributed importantly to this.
3. [REDACTED] reports which were used as specific "sourcing" for the key judgments, because they constituted the most recently received and directly relevant evidence, are forwarded herewith. All of them, we believe, convey the basic message that the vast majority of former secessionists have been joyfully surprised by their treatment so far and are presently more than ready to pick up the pieces and resume their individual pursuits as Nigerians. Two of these reports (TDCS 314/01361 and TDCS 314/01385) refer specifically to the federal relief effort in this context.

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4. Underlying and basic to the present positive attitude of the Ibos is, of course, the fact that their defeat was not followed by their slaughter. Because the Ibos' fear of "genocide" was real enough, the mere failure of any type of large-scale violent retribution to materialize inculcated in them right from the beginning of the federal occupation a mass sense of relief which had to include feelings of gratitude toward Lagos. In this psychological climate, the fact that the federal government has not only begun to try to bring the defeated secessionists back into the Nigerian body politic on generous terms, but has even gone to what is surely regarded by the conquered as extraordinary lengths to provide food and medical relief has clearly had a favorable impact.

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